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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: PUTIN DISPOSES: ALKHANOV DISMISSED, KADYROV ACTING

REF: A. MOSCOW 673 B. 06 MOSCOW 12159

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns. Reason: 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (C) President Putin dismissed Chechen President Alu Alkhanov late February 15, acting before the escalating tensions between Alkhanov and strongman PM Ramzan Kadyrov (Ref. A) got out of hand. Alkhanov was given a sinecure as Deputy Justice Minister.

[1](#)2. (C) Putin named Kadyrov acting President. Southern Federal District Representative Dmitriy Kozak will soon fly to the Chechen capital Groznyy, according to his office. Kozak's task is to come up with three names to present to Putin. Putin will choose one of the three, who must then be approved by the Chechen parliament. Even our most cautious contact in the Presidential Administration was willing to say it is a foregone conclusion that Kadyrov will be Putin's choice. He was, however, unable to give a timetable for the inauguration.

[1](#)3. (C) Kadyrov's appointment was celebrated in his home town, but the announcement came too late to allow the punditry to comment in the February 16 newspapers.

[1](#)4. (C) With Alkhanov gone, the Kremlin will have to find other ways to restrain Kadyrov's actions. The usual method has been to name independent figures -- with their own lines to Moscow -- to posts around Kadyrov. Foremost of these is the Prime Ministry, vacant after Kadyrov's promotion. Last year Kadyrov offered the post prospectively to Dagestani Duma Deputy Gadzhi Makhachev (Ref. B). Makhachev later told us he turned Kadyrov down, noting that everyone he consulted advised him against it in strong terms.

[1](#)5. (C) The person to watch, we are told, is Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Huseyn Dzhabrailov. Dzhabrailov, brother of the notorious Umar (known in the U.S. as the prime suspect in the contract murder of his American business partner), is a businessman and former director of Moscow's Rossiya Hotel. Never a combatant in the Chechen wars, he has close ties to Moscow's business community and power elite. He and Umar also devoted considerable effort over the years to cultivating Chechen religious figures, through which they wield considerable influence inside Chechnya, including over strongman Said-Magomed Kakiyev, commander of the "West" battalion and a staunch member of the Naqshbandi Sufi brotherhood.

BURNS